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Newsletter: March 2015

Protecting stray and feral cats and dogs
Promoting neutering programmes overseas

Dear Friend / Supporter

Following the generous response to our last mailing we're writing to let you know about the exciting TNR work overseas we have been able to support recently. So much is happening that we thought we would share the news with you now rather than waiting until later in the year.

International Companion Animal Welfare Conference in Istanbul 6-8 October 2014

SNIPi followed its well established tradition of representation at the conference to run a stand where delegates can apply for free equipment. The equipment is donated by SNIPi and our partners in this project, MDC Exports Ltd, Cats Protection and the Company of Animals.

In Istanbul we gave away 59 items of specialist equipment for use in catch/trap/neuter/return projects ranging from large items like hospitalisation baskets through to protective gloves. In deciding which items to apply for, the groups work out which will be most useful in their work and not least how they will transport the goods home with them. There was a high level of demand for traps, trap-transfer-restrainers and gloves (the latter especially favoured by those who had travelled by air).

Forty seven groups from 22 countries applied for equipment: Australia, Austria (3), Bahrain, Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Georgia, Greece (5), Italy, Japan, Malta, the Netherlands (2), Oman, Portugal (3), Romania (6), Serbia (2), Slovenia (2), Sri Lanka, Spain, Tanzania (2), Turkey (9; the first time they had applied) and Ukraine. Twenty of the groups (42%) had not received donations previously. As in previous years all the recipients were really appreciative as you can see in the photos.



Melvyn Driver from MDC Exports, Maggie Roberts from Cats Protection and Kate Horne from SNIP International had the pleasure of handing over the equipment donations to the ICAWC participants.



This conference had quite a nostalgic feel to it because it was the last one Clarissa Baldwin OBE attended in her role as CEO of Dogs Trust, after 40 years' service with the charity.

She will continue to sit on the Dogs Trust Board. Here she is, between Claire Horton, CEO Battersea Dogs & Cats Home and Philip Daubeny, Chairman of the Dogs Trust Board, enjoying the magnificent cruise on the river Bosphorus.

We will enjoy working with Adrian Burder, her successor, who has been known to us for many years (and is a secret cat man?).

Istanbul street cats

Lisette Cartier Van Dissel, Kate Horne and Annika Lähdeniemi took time out after the conference to investigate for themselves some of the local feline activities and services available.

We booked into a small guest house called the Stray Cats Hostel, in the area between Taksim Square and the Bosphorus. True to its name there was a tabby cat installed on the sign for the hotel, various strays enjoying a supply of cat biscuits outside and a small feline family inside which had been adopted. The cats weren't allowed in the guest rooms but nonetheless Lisette and Annika managed to get themselves allocated to a room with a dove and its chicks on the window sill. And the local cafe which we patronised because of its benign attitude towards the street cats allowed us to adopt several local felines for a few days.

It took ages to get to any of the magnificent tourist sights because every time we saw a stray cat Annika took a photo or two or three. And there are lots of tame strays on the streets in this part of the city which is animal friendly; fewer in the main tourist areas. Indeed it appeared that every shop or food stand had its resident feline, provided for by the owner.



A pretty cat keeping a baker company near the port, another cat guarding the door of a restaurant, and two cats having a sunny siesta at the cafe that became the preferred one for Kate, Lisette and Annika.

Bayrampaşa kitty parks

Yuli Weston has Turkish nationality, worked in the USA in interior design, and returned to Istanbul in 1990 to help the local animals. She set up an adoption centre in a shopping mall in Ataköy in 2003 where many hundreds of kittens and cats were adopted. She also worked very closely with the municipalities in establishing neighbourhood kitty parks, of which more later. Yuli very kindly arranged a mini tour of some local facilities.

We visited a veterinary centre in Bayrampaşa district, which was modestly equipped but provided a free service to locals, including sterilisation of stray and domestic cats. The animal shelter we visited was clean and efficiently managed. Dogs are neutered and treated if necessary, chipped and ear tagged, then returned to site if they are not adopted. There is also a cat area for sick cats receiving treatment before being returned to site.

The kitty parks, or Kedi Parki, were the highlight of the tour. These are wooden structures in local parks providing shelter and food for stray cats and kittens. They are surrounded by protective fencing with small holes for the cats to get in and out. The local council provides daily food for the cats and local animal lovers are encouraged to support the stations by helping to get the cats to the veterinary centres for sterilisation and homing the kittens. Locals wanting to adopt a cat or kitten can contact the authorities. Full details of the purpose and operation of the kitty parks are on display. There are 10 kitty parks in this district.



The kitty parks are placed in public parks, fitting very nicely with the scenery.

Saving Stan and Bul

It was while we were admiring a second kitty park that a couple of young children approached us with two tiny kittens, a ginger and a black, wrapped in an old cardigan. They said the mother had been killed on the road and their mothers said they couldn't keep the kittens. It was clear that we had been watched from one of the neighbouring flats as the municipal worker showed us round the facility; whatever the truth of the story we were suddenly responsible for two kittens, not yet weaned and crying to be fed.



The extremely hungry kittens Stan and Bul wriggling in Annika's arms while being driven to the nearest pet supply shop to buy some milk.

Next stop was a shop selling veterinary supplies, for kitten milk and teats. The hostel wasn't overly impressed by the invasion as we turned the reception area into an emergency feeding station, but allowed us to give the long overdue milkfeed to the screaming hungry kittens. Yuli came up trumps as she contacted some of the women volunteers we'd met earlier, we persuaded the hapless, kindly municipal driver to take the kittens over to the foster home, and next day received the great news that the kittens had been adopted by a nursing mother cat. Just in time since we were leaving Istanbul the next day!

Helping the stray animals of Southern Portugal

Harry Eckman of Change for Animals Foundation (CFAF), and Animals Welfare Consultant for SNIPi, has provided the following update on his cutting edge project in Praia de Faro, Portugal, which has been supported by SNIPi by way of donated cat trapping equipment.

In October CFAF undertook the next stage of our comprehensive stray animal welfare project in Praia de Faro, Southern Portugal. After a year of surveying to fully understand the numbers, dynamics and health of the local animal population as well as the attitudes and behaviours of the local community, we began our sterilisation, vaccination and treatment campaign on 18th October.



CFAF cat trappers waiting for the right moment (the two cats inside) to pull the string to close the trap.

Praia de Faro is a unique location. A narrow peninsula cut off from the mainland by miles of empty beach. The only access is via a single bridge so the animal population is almost completely contained, with no movement on or off the Praia without human intervention. Most of the animals are either there because they were abandoned or were born on the street.



A trapped cat being moved by Harry and a volunteer from a trap to a transportation basket in which it will travel to the veterinary clinic.

For two weeks, using a team of highly skilled vets and 30 volunteers, CFAP set up a fully equipped veterinary facility. With trapping teams working through the night and the veterinary team through the day, we sterilised, vaccinated and treated 161 cats – 74% of the cat population of the Praia.

The positive impact on the health and welfare of the animals was immediately noticeable as was the supportive attitude of the local community.

But this was only the next stage in CFAP's commitment to improving the lives of the animals in the longer term. On-going treatment and sterilisation of the remaining cats is already underway and, working with the local veterinary community, a similar intervention to treat, vaccinate and sterilise the local dog population is due to begin soon.

Following this, CFAP will continue to monitor and evaluate the animals for the next two years and provide on-going support to the local community to ensure the welfare of the animals for years to come.

Please find enclosed a copy of the latest leaflet which highlights our achievement of having donated well over 1000 items of specialist equipment. Maybe you could pass your copy to someone who might become a Friend? We have asked various veterinary practices to stock copies; if you think yours might agree, do let us know and we will send you a small supply. Many thanks again for all your help; it really is appreciated by the groups overseas undertaking vital work with the equipment we are able to provide.

With all best wishes



Kate Horne
Chairman, SNIP International



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